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for over a month. And the ladies and the eunuch looked into the box and they were amazed what they saw. And the eunuch said: I will go to order the guards of the Palace to seize the camel men that they may feel the bastinado until they die, for verily they have stolen the cloth which our Lord the Sultan had ordered for the ladies of his imperial harem.

Nasirulla heard the words of the eunuch and his heart stopped through very fear, and he said to his sister: Do you know where we are? We are in the Harem of the Sultan himself, the most closely guarded place in the whole empire of the Ottomans, of which it is said that no man can enter it and no man can depart from it alive, and in this place there are only girls and eunuchs.

Nasirulla turned to the dresses in which they were hiding, and he took a dress which fitted him and he put it on, and his own clothes he hid. Salma also selected a new dress and put it on, for her dress was dirty, and after they had put on the dresses Nasirulla and Salma looked like sisters, nor could anyone who saw him tell that Nasirulla was a boy, for he wore his hair long after the fashion of the dancing boys, and his moustache was not grown.

Then they heard the eunuchs call out: Ladies, come to your food. Nasirulla turned to his sister and he said: Let us go and eat, for we are hungry. And Salma replied: What, shall we go amongst them? Nasirulla said: We will go and eat. There are many hundreds of girls here and two new faces will never be noticed amongst them.

So Nasirulla and Salma went out into the hall, and they went into another hall, which was even larger than the first, and in it was laid out a great feast. And they saw before them a hundred roast sheep, and a hundred roast peacocks, and many hundreds of chickens and ducks and

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361 being mentioned in a nursery rhyme which runs:
[539]

Cukukhti, wein ukhti?	Dove, where's my sister?
B'il Hilla.	In Hilla.
Sha takal?	What does she eat?
Bajilla.	Beans.
Wein tenam?	Where does she sleep?
Bab Illah	At God's door.

and which continues for several verses.

The mace. Page 71, Line 16. 'A mace of the finest teakwood.'

411 The mace may almost be said to be a traditional weapon in South Iraq. If you meet an Arab tribesman about his normal daily routine in the countryside, he will probably be armed with a mace and dagger. Rifles are weapons of luxury, to be kept away from dust and damp.
[535] Many tribal dances are done with the mace, which is sometimes of solid wood carefully carved, and sometimes, a less beautiful weapon but more dangerous, it is made of a wooden shaft with a ball of lead or pitch at the end.

Page 74, Line 22. 'Maqdad took his course from the wind.'

821 Skilled desert guides can often recognise a wind as being from a certain quarter by its force, humidity, and temperature. The phrase here implies that the sun was clouded over and Maqdad was finding his way by the wind, which indicates that he had considerable skill. The only people who can use the wind are those who can detect quickly any change in its direction. I remember once asking some Arabs the way to a well, and they told me, Keep the wind on your left cheek. I had to use methods with which I was more familiar.

Page 81, Line 25. 'Now I shall call myself Ibn Ali.'

601 The kunya, or name defining a person by his relationship to someone else, is recorded both in classical and modern Arabic usage. Ibn Batuta, for example, a famous fourteenth century traveller, is known only by his kunya. The modern tribal practice appears to be to promote a man to a kunya when he becomes the father of a boy. A man who has become father of a boy named Qais will, for example, be hailed by his friends with exceptional heartiness for some weeks afterwards, 'Ahlan wa sahlan ya Ab Qais', and the name may or may not stick